

DD/A Registry
 File Personnel

SUMMARY OF

BRIEFING PAPER

Agency Promotion Policy

In the CIA, selection for promotion is competitive, based on evaluation and ranking at least annually in comparison to the employee's peers and judged on performance, qualifications, experience and value to the Agency.

This system is designed to promote on excellence rather than on the current position grade. The individual promoted above grade position must be properly reassigned within two years.

Recruiting for the Agency is done centrally by the Office of Personnel. Once the employee has entered on duty, he/she has historically been the responsibility of the parent career service. In 1973 the Agency conducted an extensive review of the different practices among the then 23 career services. As a result, in 1974 these services were reduced to five under direct supervision of the Deputies and the delegated head of the DCI or E service. There still remain some differences due in part to the unique requirements of the particular services. The Office of Personnel continues to monitor these with a view to increasing uniformity as practicable.

Statistics from the FY 1976 Annual Personnel Plan showed that 26 percent of the Agency was promoted, of which 10 percent were "fast track" - about half the time in grade of the others. This figure compares favorably with government and private corporations. The DDO as a career service has a comparatively smaller "fast track" record (6 percent).

Following Executive Advisory Group discussion in October 1976, the regulation on promotion policies (HR [redacted] attached) was revised. The regulation now uniformly establishes that promotion is competitive and based on the qualification to undertake higher level responsibilities.

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The Agency's Personnel Development Program, conducted annually, is designed to force Directorate management to identify and prepare executive talent from GS-13 up for high level (GS 16-17) jobs as they become vacant. Additionally, in 1977 this plan has been enlarged to include nominations from all career services for some 40-50 key senior positions. The Agency has, since 1974, even with hiring slowdowns and ceiling reductions, managed to increase the number of young senior officers. Employees GS-13 to GS-18 aged under 40 rose 15 percent (10 percent for DDO).

An employee survey in August 1976, two and one-half years after the inception of the present personnel management system, showed sufficient negativism and confusion to trigger many new initiatives in Agency personnel management.

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Employees judge their progress by comparison with peers in the Agency and outside in government and industry. The average DDO officer spends somewhat more time between promotions in senior grades. The average GS-14 in the DDO is 46, compared to 44 in the DDI.

Steady reductions in personnel since 1968 have been achieved mainly by attrition and controlling the influx of young officers. Attrition of professionals in the CIA is 6 percent, compared to 15 percent Government-wide. While the overall promotion rate for the Agency is 26 percent annually, promotion of GS-14's for 1976 in the DDO was 15 percent; GS-15's, 10 percent; and GS-16's, 2 percent. It is little better in the other directorates. Should there be further reductions, especially in supergrade ceiling, the picture will worsen.

A recent survey on morale in the Agency shows factors other than promotion which discourage the young employee. Slow progress in promotion may not be the root cause for discontent, but a discontent generated by other factors may easily focus on promotional problems. Years of cutbacks are beginning to take a toll.

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D/Pers:FWMJanney:bkf (19 Apr 77)

Approved For Release 2002/01/10 : CIA-RDP80-00473A000400100022-7

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The Deputy Director
Central Intelligence Agency

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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77-7222-1	

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Jack:

A good study, but
please provide a summary
of no more than a page
or two.

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Approved For Release 2002/01/10 : CIA-RDP80-00473A000400100022-7

DD/A 77-2073

BRIEFING PAPER

Agency Promotion Policy

Introduction

[redacted] criticizes Agency promotion policy, alleging that an ingrown clique of officers controls the DDO, that the capable younger officers are held by a system that gives no "exceptional promotions for superior performance," and that younger officers are supervised by unpromotable middle-grade officers long removed from operations activity.

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To put these statements into proper perspective, it may be useful to review the key features of Agency promotion policy, problems identified, solutions being attempted, the employee's perceptions of the system, and factors outside the system that influence promotion rates.

Agency Promotion Policies

The Agency operates under a policy of competitive selection for promotion. Each professional employee is evaluated and ranked at least annually on performance, qualifications, experience, and value to the Agency in comparison to his/her peers. Thus, each Career Service is a competitive area for promotion for the employees in that Service. Separate areas of competition may be established in that Service if necessary because of differences in occupation or function. Promotions are limited to one-grade advancements, except by specific recommendations to and approval of the Director of Personnel. They are also limited by Career Service grade authorization. Promotion for professional personnel is based on the competitive evaluation. For non-professional employees, formal comparative evaluation and ranking are not required but the principle of competitive evaluation is followed. This means that professional employees are promoted on excellence and not necessarily with regard to the grade of the position held at the time. When an employee is promoted above position grade, it is on the basis of Career Service planning that this condition of Personal Rank Assignment (PRA) will be eliminated within a two-year period by moving the employee into an appropriately higher graded position.

As recently as 1973, the Agency reviewed and revised its system of personnel administration. The Management Committee adopted in early 1974 the report of the Personnel Approaches Study Group (PASG), which set certain uniform Agency personnel management policies and directed each Deputy Director

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to establish and publish structures and guidances that would be most appropriate to meet his Career Service needs. Among the list of 16 uniform responsibilities assigned to the Deputies was: "Develop and establish uniform promotion criteria." This decentralization of responsibilities was then embodied in Headquarters Regulation [redacted]

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In August 1976 the DDCI questioned the responsiveness of the promotion process to "demonstrated excellence." In answer, promotion data for FY 1976 for three grades (GS-14, -15 and -16) were reviewed. The data showed that for the Agency as a whole, the average time in grade of those promoted to these relatively senior grades was more than four years (more than five years in the DDO), while some 10 percent of those promoted had been in grade fewer than two years. Subsequent discussions with personnel officers from other government agencies and from private corporations indicated that this figure for "fast-track" promotions compared quite favorably. The fast-track figure for the DDO, however, was six percent, not 10, while the figure for the Executive Career Service was 46 percent. The DDO had a higher average time-in-grade and a smaller percentage of "fast-track" promotions to the grades surveyed.

A survey prepared for the Executive Advisory Group in October 1976 found there were still unnecessarily wide variances in promotion policies as carried out by the Career Services. Its findings were that at that time:

The most complete explanation in an employee handbook has been given by the DDO, which bases its promotions on assessment of primary factors (quality and level of performance, growth potential, and personal qualifications and characteristics) and secondary factors (conduct and suitability, the nature and type of service, training assignments, rotational assignments, medical and security information, and the quality of reports). It has published detailed specifications of the qualifications that must be met to be promoted, according to grade and function.

The other Career Services have been more perfunctory in description, generally relying on career subgroups (Offices) to publish more detailed explanations. The DDI states that performance is the primary determinant for promotion. Promotions are made only after the individual has demonstrated clearly the ability to perform effectively at the grade level to be achieved, but sometimes are limited by headroom. The

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DDA makes a similar statement. The DDS&T states that promotions are made after clear demonstration of qualification for the next higher grade and with consideration of past performance, productivity, and skill qualifications. Competitive evaluation and ranking is an input and time-in-grade is a factor.

Where the promotion recommendations flow from panels that use explicit rating systems, the employees at least know the relative importance of the factors that are assessed and, more importantly, that the promotions do result from a systematized assessment process. The same elements of assessment should be reflected in the planning for executive development and in the inclusion of individuals in the Personnel Development Program.

There is considerable variation in the rating systems that do exist and in the relative importance attached to the specified criteria. There is no problem in this if a validation effort has been made. In some cases, however, the job-relatedness of the criteria and of their weighting is obscure.

Following Executive Advisory Group discussion, it was decided to revise HR [redacted] the regulation on promotion policy) in order to strengthen and to clarify Agency-wide promotion policies. Promotion was tied to the judgment that the employee is qualified to undertake higher level responsibilities, and affirmed that "those employees who give indication that they will be exceptional performers at higher levels of responsibility should not be constrained by time-in-grade guidelines if they are otherwise qualified for advancement." (See attachment.)

Within these guidelines, the responsibility to promulgate actual operating procedures for evaluating, ranking and then promoting employees is the responsibility of the Career Services.

The purpose of revising HR [redacted] is to bring these practices into greater uniformity and to strengthen the assessment function of the bodies that do comparative evaluation. Additionally, the revision was intended to clarify the system to all employees. HR [redacted] is now the cornerstone of the promotion process.

Personnel specialists believe that multiple-assessment, as done in the Career Boards/Panels, provides protection against favoritism or bias

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which potentially exists when promotion recommendations are made by the supervisor alone. Even more important, such multiple-assessment entails careful consideration of the employee's fitness for other assignments, a judgment that the supervisor alone is not always competent to make.

Despite these advantages, employees may still harbour suspicion that evaluating bodies also further the interests of "cliques." Though the DDO has had the longest established system in the Agency for comparative evaluation and has defined its processes in more detail than any other Career Service, there is evidence in last summer's attitudinal survey that DDO employees tend to be slightly less satisfied than the employees of other Career Services concerning the fairness of promotions.

The annual Personnel Development Program (PDP) is designed to structure the Agency's major program of personnel development and thus to support advancement based on merit. The Program, which preceded the Federal Executive Development Program, is concerned primarily with Executive Development. It identifies the requirements for a three-year period for executive replacements at the GS-15, -16 and -17 and SPS levels and lists candidates considered qualified for these assignments. In addition, there are name listings of officers in grades GS-13 through GS-15 considered to have the potential for assignments which would develop the individual's executive talents. The Agency PDP is statistical, but in addition the DCI or the DDCI can review by name the candidates for assignment and potential executives with the individual Deputy Directors, whose responsibility it is to administer the PDP for their Career Services. The PDP for FY 1975 added a new section of Developmental Profiles for officers in grades GS-09 and above. These identify general patterns of training courses and work experience for functionally homogenous groups of officers (not individuals) and set forth general qualifications standards pertinent to successive levels of professional growth. They constitute a major aid to the employee in considering his or her career development planning.

Until recently, the most senior appointments had not been included within the PDP. The nominations of officers to fill key operating positions have been made by individual Deputy Directors, with the approval of the DCI and the DDCI. Under procedures recently adopted by the DDCI, there are now multiple nominations from the Agency-at-large to the Executive Advisory Group for 40 designated senior positions (see attachment) to assure that the most promising candidates are not overlooked. This list will be supplemented by a second larger grouping of perhaps 150. It is planned that these procedures, which reflect highest level succession planning, will be integrated with the PDP report.

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Though it is alleged that promotion practices work to the disadvantage of promising younger employees, as a matter of record the Agency's efforts to identify high caliber talent under the Personnel Development Program (PDP) and to establish targets for personnel policies under the Annual Personnel Plan (APP) have had tangible effect in increasing the number of young senior officers, even during a time when hiring slowdowns and ceiling reductions have led to an increase in the average age of the Agency's employees. (See Attachment.) Thus, from December 1974 to December 1976, the number of senior-graded employees (GS-13 through -18) aged under 40 rose by 15 percent in the Agency and 10 percent in the DDO. Even so, the DDO's share of such younger officers was much less than its approximately one-third share of total Agency employment, amounting to 24 percent in 1974 and 23 percent in 1973. While the Agency in December 1976 had 10 supergrades aged under 40, the DDO had none.

Employee Perceptions

The employee attitude survey taken during the summer of 1976 predated and triggered many of the initiatives discussed earlier -- such as the revised regulation on promotions and the new procedures for key operating officials. Even so, the new Agency-wide system of comparative evaluation had been installed for some two and one-half years. The response to some key questions were:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>?</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Apply</u>
Do you understand your Career Service promotion system?	62	10	28	0
Do you think that promotions are given fairly in your Career Service?	34	30	35	1
Do younger employees receive better treatment than older employees in your Career Service?	19	32	48	1
Do you feel that the Agency has made improvements in personnel management methods and operations in the past two years?	41	35	21	3
Do you feel you have adequate opportunities for advancement in your Career Service?	43	15	41	1

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Though the response concerning the opportunities for advancement appears to be negative, it should be noted that a question by the Roper Survey in November 1976 concerning satisfaction with promotional opportunities in industry received a 44 percent negative response from women and a 33 percent negative response from men. We note a correlation between the response pattern to the question about the fairness and the question about adequate opportunities for advancement.

Based on a single survey, we cannot yet measure the shifts in response over time. Thus, we do not know if the 1976 response would have been more or less favorable than a hypothetical response in 1975.

Outside Factors

An employee has a few reference points to judge how well he or she is faring by way of promotion: the progress of peers in the Directorate, in the other Directorates, and elsewhere in government or industry. It is a fact that a DDO officer on the average spends more time-in-grade in the senior grades. (See attachment.) This can lead to discontent among ambitious young officers. It is also true that the average DDO officer in a grade tends to be older than his counterpart in other Directorates; thus, a young officer necessarily will perceive that the promotions are going to "older" officers. The average GS-14 in the DDO is 46; in the DDI, 44.

The Agency has been undergoing more or less steady reduction since 1968 [redacted] full-time employees) by means of controlling the influx of young officers while encouraging early retirement of older officers. This is particularly true for the DDO, where the separation rate has been extremely low. (CIA professional attrition is six percent compared to 15 percent Government-wide.) Despite the efforts to stimulate early retirement, most officers have had to mark time in grade and promotion rates have been low. While the overall Agency promotion rate is 26 percent annually, during 1976 promotions of GS-14's in the DDO were 15 percent; of GS-15's, 10 percent; and GS-16's, 2 percent. The picture has been little better elsewhere in the Agency.

Should Agency ceiling be further reduced, especially supergrade ceiling, prospects would become even darker.

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The recent survey of mid-level managers concerning the state of morale indicates that there are factors other than promotion, stemming mainly from CIA's "investigative period," that might be discouraging to "dynamic young people," to use [REDACTED] s words. Slow progress in promotion may not be the root cause for discontent, but a discontent generated by other factors may easily focus on promotion problems. The constraints on promotion progress engendered by years of cutback are beginning to take a toll and to provide a visible irritant to ambitious employees.

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IDENTIFICATION OF ATTACHMENTS

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- Tab A: Draft Revision of HP [REDACTED] re Promotion Policy.
- Tab B: List of Key Operating Positions
- Tab C: Chart regarding Average Age versus Average Grade
- Tac D: Promotion Data - FY 1976

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STATINTL

HR [REDACTED]

PERSONNEL

21. PROMOTION. This paragraph provides for the promotion of personnel with staff status to grades up to and including GS-15. It does not apply to the promotion of employees to grades GS-16, 17, and 18; to the promotion of employees who occupy positions compensated in accordance with Wage Classification Schedules; or to ~~especially~~ specifically qualified scientific personnel who are covered by HR [REDACTED]

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a. POLICY

(1) Promotion is based on merit. Eligibility for promotion rests on the specific assessment that the employee is qualified to undertake higher level responsibilities. The primary assessment mechanism employed, though others may be utilized with the approval of the Director of Personnel, is that of comparative evaluation of employees in a particular grade and/or function. The elements to be considered in making assessments concerning ability to perform at higher levels of responsibility are: qualification for such responsibilities; performance in ~~tasks~~ /duties/ providing insight relating to advancement potential; performance in tasks that may be already at a higher level of responsibility than present grade; display of personal

qualities that would support at least proficient performance at a higher level; and an overall evaluation of ability to perform at a higher level of responsibility either in the same function or a different function, which might include supervisory or staff responsibilities.

(2) Each Career Service comprises a competitive area for promotion for members of that service. The Head of a Career Service may establish separate areas of competition within that service when necessary because of differences in occupation or functional lines or work.

(3) Personnel serving on assignment outside their own component or outside the Agency must receive equal consideration for promotion along with personnel not so assigned.

(4) Promotions are limited to one-grade advancements. Exceptions to this policy will be made only when the Director of Personnel determines, upon recommendation of the Head of the Career Service concerned, that exception is justified.

(5) The comparative evaluation of personnel in grades GS-09 through GS-14 must be accomplished by the Heads of Career Services at least annually and will be done through the mechanism of Career Boards and, where appropriate, Career Panels, unless some other mechanism, such as an Assessment Center, ~~is~~ may be approved by the Director of Personnel.

(6) Employees in grades GS-08 and below may be evaluated for the purpose of promotion at any time that Heads of Career Services consider it appropriate, but at least annually. As the assessment function is important for such personnel, use of comparative evaluation is recommended.

(7) Those employees who give indication that they will be exceptional performers at higher levels of responsibility should not be constrained by time-in-grade guidelines if they are otherwise qualified for advancement.

(8) The bases for promotion of employees from the list of those eligible are: comparative ranking; the number of employees who may be promoted within grade ceiling constraints; and the specific comparison of qualified individuals against positions to be filled, where practicable. Time-in-grade is a guideline, not a rigid requirement.

(9) Promotion recommendations may be submitted in accordance with procedures and time schedules established by Heads of Career Services. Promotion recommendations will not be made on Fitness Reports.

(10) The regulations pertaining to personal rank assignment (HR [redacted] [redacted] to be observed.
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[redacted]

(11) The Director of Personnel will not process recommendations for promotion of employees in the absence of the last Fitness Report scheduled in accordance with HR [REDACTED] or approved exceptions, or a currently executed Fitness Report.

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(12) Career Services will retain for at least five years records of the basis for their ranking of individuals within a group being evaluated in conformity with the provisions of paragraph a(1).

(13) Career Services are responsible for publishing in their Personnel Handbooks the details of the way in which evaluation procedures incorporate the elements specified in subparagraph a(1). The Director of Personnel will review such procedures to assure that they conform to Agency regulations and policies.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) SUPERVISORS. Supervisors at all levels are responsible for providing Boards/Panels with performance appraisals in furtherance of the comparative ranking activity and, in the absence of provision for Board/Panel review of a particular grade class or function, are responsible for evaluating the merit for promotion of employees under their jurisdiction and for making the appropriate recommendations to the Head of the Career Service. Where employees are

under the cognizance of a Career Board or Panel for ranking purposes, supervisors may, if authorized by the Career Service, make promotion recommendations through such Boards or Panels in accordance with the procedures of the Career Service.

(2) HEADS OF CAREER SERVICES. The Head of each Career Service is responsible for:

(a) Developing and disseminating uniform promotion criteria in accordance with HR [REDACTED] STATINTL

(b) Providing the evaluation panels with uniform criteria for ranking in accordance with HR [REDACTED] STATINTL

(c) Continuing the promotion process for the validation of criteria utilized in the selection of employees to be promoted.

(d) Ensuring that the principle of comparative evaluation is followed as established by regulation and where extended by Career Service policies.

(e) Determining competitive areas in the Career Service.

(f) Recommending promotions to the Director of Personnel in accordance with the provisions of this regulation.

(3) DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL. The Director of Personnel is responsible for:

(a) Ensuring compliance with this regulation by continuous review of the Agency's comparative evaluation and promotion program, and

(b) Reviewing all promotion requests and approving promotion actions that conform to the provisions of Agency regulations.

EAG will Review Nominations

TAB B

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DCI Area

Assistant to the Director (for Public Media Affairs)

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Special Assistant to the Director [REDACTED]

Other Special Assistants (e.g., for Strategic Warning)

Deputy to the DCI for NIOs.

All Senior NIO positions for which CIA candidates are proposed

Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity

General Counsel

Deputy General Counsel

Legislative Counsel

Deputy Legislative Counsel

Inspector General

Comptroller

Assistant Comptroller, Resources

Assistant Comptroller, Requirements and Evaluation

Special Assistant for Strategic Intelligence (O/Comptroller)

DDA

Director of Data Processing

Director of Finance

Director of Personnel

Director of Training

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DDI

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Chief, Operations Center

Director of Central Reference

Director, Center for Policy Support

Director, Office of Imagery Analysis

Director of Scientific Intelligence

Director of Strategic Research

Director of Weapons Intelligence

Director of Regional and Political Analysis

DCO

Chief, Central Cover Staff

Chief, Covert Action Staff

Chief, Evaluation & Program Design Staff

Chief, Policy and Coordination Staff

STATINT



DDS&T

Director of ELINT

Director, National Photographic Interpretation Center

Director for Research and Development

Director of Technical Service

STATSPEC



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